

Prepared Remarks H.B. 5480, H.B. 5492, S.B. 348
Government Administration and Elections Committee
Testimony – March 10, 2014

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Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount and a software technologist. Most of my career focused on developing software, evaluating software products, and recommending technology strategy for the Travelers, in its Computer Science Division. I also spent nine years developing and marketing software products in small companies, for use in large organizations.

Today I have submitted testimony on three bills.

I support H.B. 5480, yet would like to see two improvements to better serve the public. First, that the Secretary of the State's instructions etc. be required to be posted to the Secretary's web site in a timely manner. Second, that registrars provide an email address on their web site and/or the Secretary of the State's web for communication with voters. This would be especially useful to military and overseas voters.

I oppose S.B. 348. It would make Connecticut the 1st state to effectively eliminate post-election audits. It is the same bill approved in committee last year. Please do not make that mistake again. I am working with the ROVAC to propose a bill that would strengthen the audits and provide almost the same savings. I believe we are close to agreement, yet, we have not reached agreement on all the details.

I oppose H.B. 5492 as proposed, a demonstration of electronic audits. I have long been a strong proponent of machine assisted audits, in Connecticut and nationally. Unfortunately, as written, I am concerned that it might be an unsatisfactory and redundant project – theater, not integrity – possibly delaying or precluding effective use of such technology in Connecticut. Possibly leading to what some would call a “pretend audit”. My written testimony details my concerns and proposes alternatives.

Post-election audits are different than other audits for several reasons:

- Unlike other audits they are not independent. They are conducted by the same officials who are responsible for conducting the elections, specify the election equipment, and select vendors to program them.
- Unlike financial audits, such as bank audits or campaign finance audits, because of the secret vote, there are no independent records similar to bank statements which can be compared with other financial records of the entity being audited. Election audits must be compared against the paper ballots held by election officials.
- Thus, audits and recounts must be conducted publicly and transparently, providing for public verification. Without that they cannot be trusted. Without that they cannot provide credibility for our elections, that is, credibility for our democracy.

Thank you